

## BLUFF BY BOWSER

For Once It Is Called by the Missus.

A NEW DEAL IN THE HOME.

Grouch Matched at the Office Side-tracked at Dinner—Gets Orders to Mind His Own Business—Seeks Repose Completely Awest.

By M. QUAD.  
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It had been Mr. Bowser's bad day at the office. Lots of little things had turned up to perturb and annoy, and as he made ready to start for home he gave a sigh of relief as he realized that he could pitch into Mrs. Bowser and make her suffer for all. He admitted that she had been three miles away all day and was not directly responsible, but who but her had let him leave the house that morning with a frayed collar on?

Mrs. Bowser had passed a pleasant day and had no premonition of what was to come until she saw Mr. Bowser drop off the street car. His walk betrayed his feelings. There were certain things about which she could not be mistaken. One of them was the way he kicked the gate open instead of



"HEN HUIZY!" COOK CALLS BOWSER.

treating it with respect. The front door was open, and she was in the hall to meet him and remark:

"Dinner is all ready, and as soon as we have eaten I want to have a talk with you."

"With me?" he growled.

"Yes, sir. Things can't go on this way much longer."

"I suppose the cook has quit or a water pipe burst?"

"Never mind what you suppose. You will learn all about it in due time."

Mr. Bowser was taken by surprise, but after getting seated at the table he remembered his plans and looked the dinner over and turned up his nose.

He was about to ask if it came from a penny restaurant when Mrs. Bowser pointed a finger and said:

"Not a word, sir. It's the best I could do and plenty good enough for anybody."

"By thunder, woman, is this my house or some one else's?" he exclaimed as the red came to his face.

"That's a question, sir, to be settled later on. Meanwhile I want no more profanity at my table. You are altogether too free with your words."

**Awest by Earnestness.**

She spoke so quietly and earnestly that he was awed, and though he lost something of his appetite, he nevertheless found no fault in words. He had never seen Mrs. Bowser exactly like this before, and he was puzzled to make her out. During the last five minutes of dinner he decided that the case called for heroic treatment, and when they had reached the sitting room he began:

"Now, woman, are you ready to apologize to me for your language?"

"No, man, I am not," she replied as she turned on him. "If there are any apologies coming you will make them."

"You are in your right senses, are you?"

"I am."

"And you know who you are talking to?"

"I do. Your name is Bowser."

"Yes, my name is Bowser, and I'm not used to being talked to like a hired man. Both our lawyers can be reached by telephone, and—"

"Oh, I know all about your lawyers—divorce, alimony and all that—and we can settle the thing in an hour. I am anxious to have it settled."

"By the great horn spoon, Mrs. Bowser—"

"Never mind about any horn spoons. Here is the gas bill for last month. It is 60 cents more than for the month before. Of course you'll say that I gave it away or sold it or burned it in the daytime to spite you. That's an old trick of yours, and I have got tired of it. Only two nights ago you left two burners in this room going at full blast all night."

"Holy smoke, woman!" he began, but his throat choked up and she cut in on him with:

"No foolish language in my presence, sir, and don't let me have to speak to you again about it! I had to order coal for the range today. Have you got anything to say about my extravagance landing me in the poorhouse? If so, out with it!"

Mr. Bowser was silent. That feeling of awe had begun to creep over him

again, and he was wondering if Mrs. Bowser hadn't been hypnotized or gone crazy. As he looked at her she thought he could see a startling change.

"Cook has given me notice," she went on after half a minute, "and I shall have to get another one. You'll say it's all my fault for treating her like a dog instead of asking her to play the piano and receive my callers. You'll add that if you run the house a servant would stay for years and look upon the place as a paradise. Go ahead and say it, and then I'll add that cook is leaving solely on your account."

"I deny it!" he shouted.

**Opinion From the Kitchen.**

"Makes no difference. She says you are a hen huizy and a faultfinder. A dozen other girls have left for the same reason."

Mr. Bowser opened his mouth to shout back, but a sudden weakness came to his knees, and he sat down. Things were not going as he had planned.

"And here's a butcher bill for 50 cents," said Mrs. Bowser as she took it off the mantel. "I don't remember running in debt for meat, but I suppose the bill must be all right. It's another argument for you about my reckless extravagance, and I'm waiting for you to begin."

"I give you money to run the house," was the reply.

"Yes, and of course I send it to the leanhorns or the orphanas or burn it up—anything to hustle you along to that poorhouse. You don't half yell over it."

Mr. Bowser got up and sat down again, and he choked and gasped and turned red and white, but he couldn't say a word.

"And while on this subject of extravagance let me say that your bill for cigars last month was \$12. During the same month you gave me money to buy two pairs of stockings at 65 cents a pair. Your club expenses would dress me nicely, but of course I can't find fault with your extravagances. I am the one who is galloping this family over the road to the poorhouse!"

"Woman!" Mr. Bowser managed to gasp with great effort, but while he was trying to think of something more she said:

"When I went upstairs this morning after breakfast I found your clothes scattered all over the room and everything topsy turvy. The next time I find such a mess I shall throw everything out of the window for you to sort and pick up. I don't propose that you shall put an hour's extra work on me."

"Such talk to me—to Bowser!" he whispered as he stared at her.

**A New Deal Ordered.**

"To you and to no one else, and I want it distinctly understood that there's a new deal on in this house. If there's to be any more kicking I'm going to do it myself. As a beginning of the new deal you keep out of the kitchen. If you try to mix in you'll hear something drop!"

"And you—you are talking to me?"

"Yes, sir, and I want you to remember every word I say. There are to be no more hogs or chickens in the back yard. There will be no more experimenting with the gas meter or the water pipes. You will let the electric bells alone and keep your hands off the piano. If you bring home fire escapes, burglar alarms, patent lamps or foghorns they will go over the fence into the alley. If you bring home hair dyes, liver regulators, lung pads or anything in that line they will go into the stove."

"And she is talking to me—to Bowser!" he murmured as he rubbed his eyes and looked around the room.

"Yes, to you," she replied, "and I am not half through yet. I shall leave the rest until tomorrow night, however, as I am a bit tired tonight. I am now going to bed, and you can sit here on the front steps, go to a club or stand on your head. As for a divorce, get one as soon as you please. Good night, sir!"

"And she is Mrs. Bowser and I am Mr. Bowser!" gasped the bluffer after she had gone. "I came home to—to—I can't understand it—I really can't."

And two hours later, when she crept softly downstairs, she found him asleep on the lounge and a look of awe extending from his chin clear over his bald pate to the back of his neck. The bluffer had been bluffed.

**Sky Piloting.**

"I've lost my way. Can you direct me to Newport?"

"See that purple cloud about ten miles east?"

"Yes."

"See that flock of geese about five miles south of the cloud?"

"Yes."

"Well, Newport is about two miles below where those geese were when I first pointed them out."—Browning's Magazine.

**A Long Time.**

A small boy entering a store said to the clerk, "Please, sir, mamma wants a tape line."

"How long does she want it?" asked the clerk.

"I don't know, sir," replied the boy. "But I think she wants to keep it."—Housekeeper.

**Tommy's Surmise.**

Mr. Baldy—Yes, Tommy, even the hairs of our heads are numbered.

Tommy (glancing at his father's intellectual dome)—Don't take much fingerin' to get your number, does it, pa?—Harper's Weekly.

**Confusion Worries Confound It!**

It is easy enough to look pleasant while facing yourself in the thing. But the girl who's worth while is the one who can smile while her "straight front" breakfasts a string.

—L.H.

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